United Nations A/HRC/28/NGO/56

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 February 2015

English only

Human Rights Council
Twenty-eighth session
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the International Educational Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.15-03058

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Violations of Kurdish people rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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International Educational Development, Inc., the Association of Humanitarian Lawyers and the Association for Human Rights in Kurdistan of Iran-Geneva (KMMK-G) have addressed the situation in Iran for many years and have worked closely with the various rapporteurs of the Council on this topic. We have been especially concerned about the violations of the rights of the Kurdish population there where people have been tortured, imprisoned and executed for demanding their fundamentals rights. The number of executions, imprisonments, indiscriminate killing of border couriers (kulbaran) and landmines explosions against civilians are dramatically rising.

Kurdish political prisoners

The number of Kurdish rights activists facing imprisonment, torture, and execution continues to rise. According to right groups Iran holds at least 900 political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, including roughly 400 members of the Kurdish community.[1] Out of 93 political prisoners sentenced to death for crimes of "*Mohareb*" enmity against god, 62 of them are of Kurdish ethnicity.[2]

Indiscriminate killings of Kurdish border couriers

Despite the new administration pledges to change the government security approach towards Iranian Kurdistan, the number of indiscriminate killings of Kurdish Kulbaran/kasebkaran (border couriers-tradesmen) by Iranian security forces, is dramatically rising. Due to high rate of unemployment and the land contamination by landmines and explosive remnants of war, the Kurdish youth and farmers from four Kurdish provinces of Kermanshah, Kordistan, Ilam and West Azerbaijan engage in smuggling commodities such items as tea, tobacco and fuel to earn a living. Our working partner the KMMK-G has received reports of 70 cases of government security force's shooting on Kurdish Kulbars in 2014. At least 30 border couriers were killed and 30 other wounded by the government border security forces without respecting even the Iranian domestic law, which, authorize the use of lethal force only as a last resort.[3]

Landmines' victims in Iranian Kurdistan

Iran is one of the most mined countries in the Middle East. Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), especially unexploded ordnance (UXO) — which includes remnants of cluster munitions — litter Iran as a result of the Iran-Iraq War that lasted from 1980 to 1988 and as well as an armed conflict between state army and Kurdish non-state armed combatants.4 During the War and the internal conflict, the Iranian army placed an estimated 20 million landmines throughout its border with Iraq, a region that covers more than four million hectares (15,444 square miles). According to Iran's Mine Action Centre's Head, Brig. Gen. M H Amir Ahmadi, over 10,000 people were killed due to landmines.[5] Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War affect particularly the Kurdish provinces — Kurdistan, Western Azerbaijan, Ilam and Kermanshah are all close to Iraq — as well as Khuzestan (Ahwaz – Arab region).[6]

According to our statistics, from the beginning of 2013 till now, 89 civilians suffered landmines explosions in Kurdish

[1] http://www.kmmk-ge.org/?p=625&lang=en

[2] http://united4iran.org/political-prisoners-database/search-results/?fields%5Bname%5D&fields%5B10070%5D%5B0%5D=10075&fields%5B11000%5D%5B0%5D&fields%5B10130%5D%5B0%5D&fields%5B10340%5D%5B0%5D&fields%5B10400%5D%5B0%5D=10410&ppd_p=3

[3] http://www.kmmk-ge.org/?p=645&lang=en

4 http://www.jmu.edu/cisr/journal/11.2/focus/kohli/kohli.shtml

[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE3OlSFV5M8&feature=youtu.be, consulted on February 2015.

[6] http://www.jmu.edu/cisr/journal/11.2/focus/kohli/kohli.shtml

four provinces. 12 of them are aged less than 15 years old. In 2013, 46 civilians walked on landmines and explosive remnants of war, 11 of them died and 35 of them incurred disabilities or injuries.7 In 2014, 43 Kurdish civilians incurred disabilities or injuries due to landmines and unexploded munitions. Nine individuals have lost their life, 12 has lost a leg and the rest were injured and four of them seriously.[8]

Despite the elevated number of landmines human casualties and despite the United Nations and international community repeated calls on the Iranian government to ratify the Ottawa Landmine Ban Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran refuses to adhere to the convention and fails to take necessary measures to clear Kurdistan from landmines.

Mother tongue education

Under the article 15 of the Iranian Constitution, the official language is Persian. The same article stipulates that the teaching of the literature of regi al and tribal languages is allowed in addition to Persian, in the press and mass media. However, the mention of regional languages is only a façade, since the Kurdish and other national minorities' language is not taught in schools, the national minorities newspapers are regularly closed down and the journalists arrested.
According to a disclosed document[1], the Iranian Ministry of Education circulated an official confidential document (Refrence N° 392/170, Iranian dated Lunar 09/10/1391) in Kurdish province of Kermanshah prohibiting the teachers to use the local language namely Kurdish in Public sphere and schools.[9]

The members of Kurdistan Teachers Union (KTU) (Ramin Zandnia, Baha Maleki, Peyman Nodinian, Ali Qureyshi, Kamal Fakurian, Mostafa Sarbazan, Ezat Nosrati, Parviz Nasehi, Mohammad Sadigh Sadeghi, Hiva Ahmadi and Reza Vakili) were each sentenced to four months in jail, which has been suspended for two years. The banishment verdict of Mokhtar Asadi another member of KTU was renewed for the fifth consecutive year and the travel ban on Mr. Hashem Khastar, a Kurdish cultural activist, was also renewed.[10]

Moreover, the only Kurdish news agency, the Mukeryan News Agency, was shut down on February 2013 and it's director Mr. Massoud Kurdpur and as well as his brother Khosrow Kurdpur were sentenced to jail12.[11]

Recommendations:

1. The Council should call upon the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to join to the Ottawa Convention and to take immediate steps to assist the landmines victims without discrimination.

2. To protect all prisoners from torture and other ill-treatment; and immediately and unconditionally release all individuals held in connection with their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression or association.

3. To put an end to *indiscriminate killings* of Kurdish border couriers.

4. To allow the education in mother tongue for the children belonging to member of ethnic groups. And to fully respect the Iran's own constitution as well as its international commitments regarding the education of mother tongue for ethnic nationalities.

5. The Special Rapporteur should consider a joint effort with the mandate holder on minority rights and/or the mandate holder on the right to education:

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[7] http://www.kurdpa.net/farsi/idame/18443
[8] http://www.kmmk-ge.org/?p=633&lang=en
[9] http://www.kurdpa.net/farsi/idame//7971
[10] http://www.humanrights-ir.org/php/view_en.php?objnr=828
[11] (http://www.humanrights-ir.org/php/view_en.php?objnr=880) and (http://www.kmmk-ge.org/?p=445&lang=en